St. Mark's Church.

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Explanation and Appeal.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. vi, 2.

To all Friends of old St. Mark's past and present,

Greeting:

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! We thank God on every remembrance of you." Knowing that our prosperity is your delight, our adversity your sorrow, we wish to lay before you both sides of our circumstance. Our joy is your rejoicing, and your sorrow our regret. For you are our plans, in your interest our purposes. Because of this, we take you into our confidence, expressing with equal freedom our fulness and our need.

It is an easy matter to plan, but it is often as difficult to execute. At least we have thus found it all through life. The easy in purpose has proved the impossible in attainment. Yet have we not succumbed to difficulty, but in its face have carried out, if not to the full measure of aim, or the greater extent of wish and desire, some of our schemes of usefulness. And what we thus say of ourselves, we can as truthfully say of our town.

Indeed no one acquainted with the quaint old town of Niagara for any considerable length of time, can quite ignore the greatness and propriety of recent changes, or wholly deny the fact of wonderful improvement therein. To many in these regards, the place is a marvel. Of a certain preacher, noted as much for his eccentricities as for his piety, it is said, that when he first entered the town with its grass-grown streets and its genuine and general rustic rusticity, he exclaimed in tones dramatic, "Tread softly Sam Jones, for you walk the city of the dead!" Ten years ago, such an exclamation may have been perfectly in order; it would to-day be a libelous outrage—a gross absurdity. With our excellent system of electric lighting, new buildings of every description, general renovation of cottage and mansion, gardens laden with fragrance and filled with beauty, combined with almost perfect summer service of steamboat and railway, where can be found a place more generally progressive, more abundantly healthful and more perfectly beautiful? And, for surroundings, what is left to be desired?

Not among the least of the attractions and improvements are those of the old historic church of St. Mark, in which to worship is alike our privilege and joy.

"High on the bank, mid'st beauteous setting
Of feathery willow, chestnut-tree and pine,"

Could anything be more sweet and clean, more generally comfort-giving and restful? Not that it lacks defect, and not that all its appointments are perfect; for that would make plan a folly and improvement a presumption. Yet is its atmosphere pure, its position graceful and its surroundings lovely; simple its worship and world-wide its influence. With its foundations in a past century, it has grown rich with the years in hallowed memorials and historic associations. Its walls are history. Its chimes are a charm. It has been visited by multitudes, worshipped in by patrician and plebeian, statesman and warrior, regal representative and humble fisherman, the man of letters and the rustic rude; while the dust of some of the best and truest sons of England and America blend in a common peace in the sweetest resting place of mortals on this continent —the quiet yard, that garden of memorials, in the midst of which it stands.

For the space of 104 years its affairs were directed and its offices ministered by but three Incumbents—the Rev. Robt. Addison and Thos. Creen, and the venerable Archdeacon of Niagara, Wm. McMurray, D. D., D. C. L.—the present Rector being the fourth possessor of the living since 1792. Facts and fabric therefore are alike venerable. If prestige mean value, what church of its kind on this continent can have greater or more?

And yet in this world of uneven circumstance, riches and poverty are often associated. Thus it is in our case to-day. While rich in an inheritance of no common dignity, rich in ancestral associations and hallowed records, rich in the deposit of the mortal dust of the great and the good lying around and beneath us, and rich in the respect accorded this fabric, we are but poor in comparison of what such riches demand. Poor, comparatively, in our winter population, poor in the matter of revenue and treasury, and all the more poor for our great respectability and rich exterior. Indeed our riches are our poverty. Our strength is our weakness. Our want lies in our abundance.

With the flight of years has come an era of necessarily increasing expenditure. Things must comport with position. The edifice and surroundings must be kept up in the interest of the living and in honor of the dead. We may not, we should not and we must not, if means for its prevention are to be secured by the asking, allow decay to come with change. Change there must be, but surely not decay.

For the love of the past, whose memorials we treasure; for the good of the present, whose record we make; and for the blessing of that future which yet is unfolded; we make this plea for sustenance. We ask

all friends of old St. Mark's, new and old, nearly and remotely related thereto, to help us over our present difficulties. We plan daily their gratification and their glory in constant renewals and improvements, which, left to our own unaided efforts, it must be impossible to execute. To many of you the burden we bear would be light; to us it is crushing The few hundred dollars we need, to our friends happily circumstanced and blessed with this world's goods, would be a mere bagatelle to relieve by their gifts. Will they help us? Dear friends will you?

On next Sunday morning, D. V., the opportunity will be afforded, and we ask all to join in making not a right Royal or good Republican, but a worthy Christian offering unto the Lord. We need a thousand; will you make an united offering of at least five hundred dollars? Our debt is our inheritance, not our making. Our noble women have been helping to reduce it, while assisting in making the improvements so abundantly visible. We thank God for them. In no mendicant attitude and in no beggarly spirit do we state our case and make our appeal—too honorable for the former and too dignified for the latter, we claim of Christian right your Christian recognition. We cannot continue the accumulation of debt, and we cannot do the work required of us unaided without so doing, As in the time of David, it was said of Israel, so may it now be said of us,—"The people offered willingly." Sanctified by your prayers and proportioned by your means. your offering must be acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

Yours for Christ's sake,

JNO. C. GARRETT, Rector.

Sunday, July 26th, 1896.

L. M. NELLES. }
J. B. SECORD. } Church Wardens.

N. B.—It has been suggested by one of the former-day parishioners of St. Mark's, that a church Society should be formed of past and present parishioners, for the purpose of securing an annual income for the repair and preservation of the old historic building. I need not say that to myself and Churchwardens the suggestion seems as appropriate as it is timely.

JNO. C. GARRETT.